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**Sent:** 4/10/2020 6:37:16 PM  
**To:** jafife@townofharrison.com  
**CC:** Rosoff, David [Rosoff.David@epa.gov]; DOnofrio, Cris [DOnofrio.Cris@epa.gov]  
**Subject:** FW: What They Are Saying | EPA Takes Action to Guide Health and Safety Decisions at Cleanup Sites During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Mayor Fife,

We want to thank you again for your support. Below are the press releases that were issued today. We wanted to just share them with you.

Thank you again and please don't hesitate to reach out if you need anything.

Stay safe and healthy.  
Shereen, Dave, and Cris

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**Shereen Kandil**

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## **EPA Takes Action to Guide Health and Safety Decisions at Cleanup Sites During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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**WASHINGTON** (April 10, 2020) – Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued interim guidance to the Agency's regional offices to ensure that decisions about new or ongoing cleanup activities at sites across the country are made with the health and safety of communities, state and tribal partners, EPA staff, and contractors as the priority.

The interim guidance focuses on decision making at emergency response and longer term cleanups sites where EPA is the lead agency or has direct oversight of, or responsibility for, the cleanup work. This includes, but is not limited to, Superfund cleanups, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) corrective actions, Toxic Substance and Control Act PCB cleanups, Oil Pollution Act spill responses, and Underground Storage Tank Program actions. In addition, EPA is sharing this guidance with states to take into consideration as they encounter similar issues at state-lead RCRA cleanup sites.

“EPA remains committed to protecting human health and the environment as we continue to adjust to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic,” **said EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler**. “This guidance will allow us to keep workers and the residents in these communities safe while also being able to respond to any emergency that may present an imminent danger to the public health or welfare.”

EPA will, as appropriate, update this guidance as the current situation with COVID-19 evolves.

### **Guidance for EPA Regional Offices on Field Work Decisions at Cleanup Sites**

To address the current challenges posed by the COVID-19 situation, EPA is making decisions about continuing, reducing, or pausing on-site activities on a case-by-case basis consistent with the following priorities:

- Protecting the health and safety of the public, as well as maintaining the health and safety of EPA staff and cleanup partners, is the Agency’s highest priority. Integral to the protection of health and safety is the close coordination with federal, state, tribal, or local health authorities.
- Maintaining EPA’s ability to prevent and respond to environmental emergencies, is also a critical priority for the Agency.

This same approach will apply to EPA’s decision making related to requests from outside parties engaged in cleanup and response sites (e.g., states, tribes, local governments, other federal agencies, other parties, property owners, etc.) for extensions or delays in performance. These decisions will be made in accordance with any existing agreements or enforcement instruments.

The interim guidance issued today also includes directions to the Agency’s regional offices on the following:

- **Considering site-specific factors when deciding on whether response actions will continue or be reduced, paused or resumed:** Consideration of these factors will help the Agency make nationally consistent decisions when addressing similar factual situations at sites. For example, regional management will consider whether failure to continue response actions would likely pose an imminent and substantial endangerment to human health or the environment, and whether it is practical to continue such actions.
- **Applying Applicable Enforcement Instruments:** Decisions to extend obligations or pause work obligations will be made in accordance with applicable enforcement instruments. These enforcement instruments may contain provisions allowing for adjustments to schedules to be made at the discretion of EPA’s project manager, and/or force majeure provisions, generally including directions to responsible parties on providing the requisite notice and other information to EPA related to a requested extension.
- **Conducting Non-Field Site Work:** Because much of the work to advance cleanup of sites is performed away from sites, to the extent possible, this work will continue. This includes important work that can be conducted virtually such as investigation reports (including pre-NPL work), modeling, negotiations between the parties, decision documents, cleanup documentation, workplans, progress reports, and maintaining compliance with obligations such as financial assurance.
- **Planning for Next Steps After Pausing Site Work:** If a decision is made to temporarily reduce or suspend field work, Regions will continue to monitor site conditions and plan the logistics for resuming field work as soon as possible when appropriate.

In addition, it is recommended that Superfund site teams cancel or postpone in-person public meeting events, door-to-door visits, and other site-related face to face interactions to be consistent with current [COVID-19](#)

guidance from the CDC and other federal, state, tribal and local officials. We fully encourage EPA staff to keep in contact with affected communities using virtual and other communication tools such as on-line meetings, webinars, conference calls, and call-in numbers, as well as fact sheets, postcards, phone, and social media.

### Additional Information

As of the beginning of April, EPA has reduced or paused on-site construction work at approximately 34 EPA or PRP-lead Superfund National Priority List sites, or 12% of all EPA sites with ongoing remedial actions, due to the evolving situation with COVID-19. Regions have decided and may continue to decide to reduce or suspend response actions at particular sites for the following or similar situations:

- State, tribal, or local health officials have requested particular site operations or types of operations that would pertain to particular sites be suspended.
- Site workers have tested positive for or exhibited symptoms of COVID-19.
- Sites where there may be close interaction with high risk groups or those under quarantine, such as work inside homes.
- Sites where contractor field personnel are not able to work due to state, tribal, or local travel restrictions or medical quarantine.
- Sites where social distancing is not possible.

The Interim Guidance is available on the agency's website at: <https://www.epa.gov/superfund/interim-guidance-site-field-work-decisions-due-impacts-covid-19>.

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**From:** EPA Press Office <[press@epa.gov](mailto:press@epa.gov)>

**Sent:** Friday, April 10, 2020 12:02 PM

**To:** Mears, Mary <[Mears.Mary@epa.gov](mailto:Mears.Mary@epa.gov)>

**Subject:** What They Are Saying | EPA Takes Action to Guide Health and Safety Decisions at Cleanup Sites During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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## EPA Takes Action to Guide Health and Safety Decisions at Cleanup Sites During the COVID-19 Pandemic

WASHINGTON (April 10, 2020) – Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued interim guidance to the Agency's regional offices to ensure that decisions about new or ongoing cleanup activities at sites across the country are made with the health and safety of communities, state and tribal partners, EPA staff, and contractors as the priority. Here's what stakeholders and public officials are saying:

**Association of State and Territorial Waste Management Officials (ASTSWMO):**

“ASTSWMO’s membership supports EPA working closely with their State and Territorial partners to ensure human health and the environment are protected during this current situation. That is best done jointly, working together to determine the best course of action under this guidance for decision-making at all cleanup sites potentially affected by the current COVID-19 precautions”

**Bobby Janecka, Commissioner, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality:** “I am pleased by EPA’s commitment to continue vital cleanup work at Superfund sites while supporting appropriate social distancing measures. Communities across our state will be grateful to see EPA thoughtfully continuing needed remediation work at sites such as the Donna Reservoir and Canal Federal Superfund site in South Texas.”

**Jim Macy, Director, Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy:** “We appreciate and support our federal partners in their efforts to implement cleanup activity guidance during this difficult time. The guidance allows us to remain committed to our mission to protect and improve human health, the environment, and energy resources while supporting the State of Nebraska in our response to the COVID-19 pandemic.”

**Scott Thompson, Executive Director, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality:** “This guidance reflects what is already occurring within programs. Each remediation site that EPA and states deal with presents unique challenges, and many routinely require site-specific determinations. The current COVID-19 event poses additional challenges, and most if not all states have prioritized critical actions over less critical ones in all programs at this point. Clearly EPA and state agencies will do whatever it takes during this time to respond to natural disasters or emergencies involving remediation sites while trying to maintain social distancing.”

**Austin Caperton, Cabinet Secretary, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection:** “West Virginia had already taken steps to protect our citizens and is well positioned to accommodate EPA’s guidance during this crisis. The past few weeks have proven our ability to continue moving all DEP processes forward to protect the environment and our people.”

**Gerry Geist, Executive Director, Association of Towns of the State of New York:**

“Town officials care about protecting the environment and public health while ensuring the personal health and safety of individuals working to clean up contaminated property. The EPA interim guidance issued today will help EPA Region 2 evaluate whether to begin, continue or secure and suspend site remediation work on environmental cleanup projects while protecting the personal health of workers and the community health of residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

**Jeff Grove, Mayor of LaSalle, Illinois:** “I wanted to take the opportunity to appreciate the partnership we, at the City of La Salle, have with the EPA. From day one, there has

been open and transparent communication among the EPA, city leadership and our La Salle residents. We understand and support the decision to postpone design sampling in the residential areas of the site indefinitely, as we all work to follow safety guidelines and ‘shelter in place’ mandates during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our La Salle residents have been understanding and flexible with other adjustments we have had to make for City services. The bottom line is that we are all confident that the work the EPA has started will eventually continue when life returns to a sense of normalcy. We all appreciate that!”

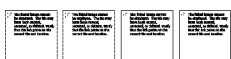
**Brian Sorochty, Mayor of Village of Holley, New York:** “While this project is extremely important to the Village of Holley residents, we understand and support the EPA’s decision to place this project temporarily on hold. In light of the nationwide situation with the COVID-19 virus, the health and welfare of the EPA/USACOE personnel, contractors, and our residents must be the top priority. We look forward to this work commencing as soon as possible, based on recommendations from the state and local health officials and the CDC.”

**Libby Szabo, Jefferson County Commissioner, Colorado:** “It is always a good idea to pause and take a look at what we are doing and how we are doing it, especially in this time of uncertainty. I applaud the EPA for recognizing this and what they are doing to keep our communities safe and strong.”

**Karen Sullivan, Butte-Silver Bow Health Officer, Montana:** “Recognition by the EPA of the severity of the COVID-19 crisis and its potential impact on EPA staff, the stakeholders at our various Superfund sites in Butte-Silver Bow, and members of our community is greatly appreciated by me. Our collective health and safety is paramount, and EPA’s contribution to helping us manage this event in Butte-Silver Bow is welcomed.”

**Robert D. Moore, Director, Portsmouth Economic Development:** “Continuing work at the Atlantic Wood Industries Superfund Site is vital to the Portsmouth small business community for a number of reasons and we are grateful for the EPA’s continued support of the remediation efforts. It is important to maintain standards on the site throughout these unprecedented times, and the ongoing daily operations allow for workers throughout our economy to stay active and engaged. The project site is also a key location for redevelopment which will become even more necessary as we look into the recovery period.”

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